

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 20-31 remain pending in this application with Claims 20, 24-26 and 28-31 being independent. No claims have been amended herein.

Claims 20-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 7,159,960 (Nunokawa et al.). Without conceding the propriety of this rejection, and solely to expedite allowance, Applicants are submitting herewith a sworn English translation of Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-167364 filed June 12, 2003, on which the above-identified U.S. patent application claims priority. All of the pending claims are supported by this earlier-filed priority application. This establishes an effective filing date earlier than the U. S. Filing date of Nunokawa et al. Accordingly, Nunokawa et al. no longer qualifies as prior art under any sub-section of § 102 .

Favorable consideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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FCBS\_WS 2637628v1